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STATEMENT

BY THE SPOKESMAN OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ON THE SENTENCING TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT OF A TIMORESE IN DILI

Portugal has repeatedly denounced the steady cynicism and contempt with which Indonesia defies international criticism and demarches. The Jakarta authorities continue to offer a deplorable image in the trials and sentencing of the Timorese civilians arrested in the wake of the massacre committed on 12 November 1992 in Santa Cruz cemetery.

It has now been the turn of Gregorio da Cunha Saldanha to be sentenced to life imprisonment, accused of having been the main instigator and organizer of the demonstration held on that day. A few days ago, Francisco Miranda Braco was given 15 years. Neither of them was charged with violence, and both should therefore, like the other civilian demonstrators who have received long prison sentences, have been released without delay in accordance with the UNHCR consensus statement to which Indonesia subscribed.

The iniquitous and unlawful sentence handed down to Gregorio da Cunha Saldanha shows Indonesia's growing contempt for the international community. It is clear proof that the promises it made with the aim of lessening the indignation caused by the massacre cannot be trusted, and that the Indonesian authorities have no intention whatsoever of respecting the commitments they gave before the UN Human Rights Commission.

Indonesian repression of the survivors of the Santa Cruz massacre remains merciless, whilst the soldiers actually responsible for the shooting have been given token sentences, mainly on charges of disobeying orders. The promised investigations into the circumstances surrounding the massacre, and punishment of those responsible, have produced this grotesque result, which reveals a total lack of good faith.

Indonesia's willingness to go back on its own word cannot be ignored by those who hitherto have sought to justify their own acceptance of the Jakarta government's promises and the "cooperative" attitude it has been demonstrating since the Santa Cruz massacre.